

FIRST BREAK HOME

Congratulations!

If you're reading this, then you got through the hardest part

(or will be well prepared for it!) -- your T1D child's first semester of college. The first break home is an exciting time for both you and your child, but it shouldn't be ruined by arguments over diabetes care.

As much fun as college can be, college students also look forward to coming home on breaks. Diabetes shouldn't get in the way of your child enjoying his/her time at home. The main thing to remember is to communicate and respect one another.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Their Self Care Plan Has Changed: By the time your child comes home for break, they have been independently managing their diabetes for at least two months. During that time, it is likely they have developed new management techniques that best fit with their new lifestyle in college. They might be different from what they have previously done in high school. This is a good sign that your child is starting to feel confident and empowered in their diabetes management. Finding out what works best for them is all part of your child becoming more independent in their care – be proud.

A Higher A1c: College life is an extremely tricky time for managing diabetes. Between a busy class schedule, adjusting to the dining hall, and balancing extracurricular activities, there are a lot of obstacles to overcome and adapt to when managing diabetes. It is normal for your child to return home with a higher A1c. It is unrealistic to expect them to have perfected their routine after a few months. Instead of worrying or questioning, ask them if they want help brainstorming ways to better balance their lifestyle next semester.

BE OPEN TO ADJUSTMENTS

Your child's management routines may have changed from home to school. If they found something that works for them, let it happen. At the end of the day, it is important for them to have the control over what works best for them.

ENCOURAGE INDEPENDENCE

The best thing you can do for your child while they are home for break is to encourage them to be independent. They have spent the past two months managing diabetes by themselves, so reassure them to continue that while at home. Make diabetes something they can be proud of.

STICK TO YOUR COMMUNICATION PLAN

Whether you have a written or spoken plan, don't be afraid to talk about what each of you expect from the other. Communication is key to relationships and resolving differing expectations now can prevent later arguments. If you don't have a communication plan, it might be helpful to set up some ground rules for the break (*e.g. I promise not to ask you what your blood sugar is while you're home if you promise to check your blood sugar before you drive*).

TREAT THEM LIKE AN ADULT

After living on their own for several months, your child will likely expect to be treated as an adult. Respecting their newfound independence throughout the break will empower them to take control of the management of their diabetes.

GET HUNG UP ON THE NUMBERS

By now, your child has gotten the hang of daily diabetes management on their own, so try to avoid falling back into old habits. Instead, try asking questions such as: How have you been feeling about diabetes since you've gone to college? Is there anything I can help to take off your plate while you're at home for break?

QUESTION WHAT THEY EAT

Your child has been choosing what they eat for several months now, and you may have opinions about the choices they make during break. Analyzing what they eat will likely lead to frustration and arguments. Especially during the holidays, it is common to stray away from the usual guidelines and indulge a little (*we all do it*). As hard as it may be, try to avoid judgmental comments or questions!

MAKE ASSUMPTIONS

Mistakes made at home are not necessarily the same mistakes made at school. The transition from care at school to care at home is not as easy as you may think. Don't let one mistake be the end of their newfound independence. Continue supporting your child and encouraging the steps they've taken to control their T1D management on their own.